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MAGPIE LANE

POEMS BY
NANCY BYRD TURNER

PICTURES BY
DECIE MERWIN

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To

MABEL JOHNSON

who showed me Magpie Lane

CO. SCHOOLS

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Note of Acknowledgment

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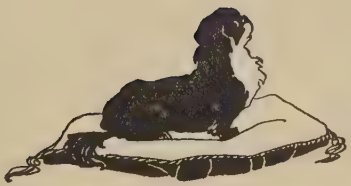


Bells

LONG ago and long ago I ran across a story,
Such a little quirky tale—I loved it, every line!
Richard with his trusty cat traipsing up to London,
Halting at the crossway post to read the crooked sign;
Amber eye and velvet ear crumpled on his shoulder,
Brambles in his shabby clothes, doubting—should he dare?
Troubled, facing home again, all his castles tumbled—then
Bow Bells crying sudden sweet, like angels in the air:

Turn again, Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London!
Look again, the miles are long,
But see the spires burn!
Try again, the towers shine!
(Prickles tingling up my spine,
Heart in mouth, Dick Whittington,
For fear you wouldn't turn!)

Lord Mayor of London, the dusty road you traveled
Stretches straight and level now, paved with proper stones;
The ruffled coat they dressed you in has long ago unraveled,
And all the tides of Temple Bar go loud above your bones.
Amber Eye is ash-of-fur; they lodged him near the larder;
He died of stuffing pasty tarts and lapping yellow cream;
Bow Bells' loud and lusty din has shouted many mayors in,
But still I hear their challenge flung across the hills of dream:

Turn again, Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London!
Chanting through the deepest dusk,
They ring your bright renown. . . .
And though my steps were stumbling back,
I laugh and buckle on my pack,
And turn again, and take again
The road to London Town!

Linda Lou

A CERTAIN girl named Linda Lou
Was almost shocking:
She'd only wear her right shoe
And her left stocking.

"When these are full of holes," she said,
"I'll have, brand new,
A spick right stocking
And a span left shoe!"

Take Care!

TAKE care, May Lucy; you're little and slim,
The wind is strong, and the wind is wild;
It blows with a will, and it blows with a vim;
It blows right over the world's far rim.
Look out, you foolish child!

What would you think if, all in a wink,
Quick as Jack Robinson, you should rise
And, off with the gale over hill and dale,
Your feet for rudder, your skirt for sail,
Should blow across the skies?

It's a hurricane wind and all awhirl.
Take care, May Lucy, so little and light,
Or some far day the people will say,
"Who, May Lucy? That little girl
Who sailed away on a kite?"

Adventure

THE little men of meadow land,
Said they to me, said they,
"There're bunnies in this meadow
As swift as any shadow,
With ears of amber velvet
And coats of silver gray;
And if you'll bring some goodies
And wait a little while
(Don't breathe, don't smile),
Perhaps you'll see those bunnies gray,"
Said they to me, said they.

I ran and filled a basket quick
With carrots pinky-gold
And lettuce green and crinkly
And apples red and twinkly
And munchy, crunchy tidbits,
As full as it would hold,
And put it down tiptoeing,
And waited very still
  Until—until
Across the grass three bunnies strolled,
High stepping, light and bold.

Their tails were soft as thistledown,
Their coats were silver gray;
They minced along politely
And twitched their noses slightly,
With amber ears uplifted
In just the loveliest way.
I said, "I never, never
Had really hoped to meet
  Bunnies sweet!"
"You never tried until today,"
Said they to me, said they.

The Buccaneer

DANNY was a rascal,
Danny was a scamp;
He carried off a lady doll
And left her in the damp.

He took her off on Monday;
On Wednesday in he came
And dumped her gayly on the floor
Without a bit of shame.

He was not sad or humble,
He begged nobody's pardon;
He merely barked: "A lady doll
I found out in the garden!"

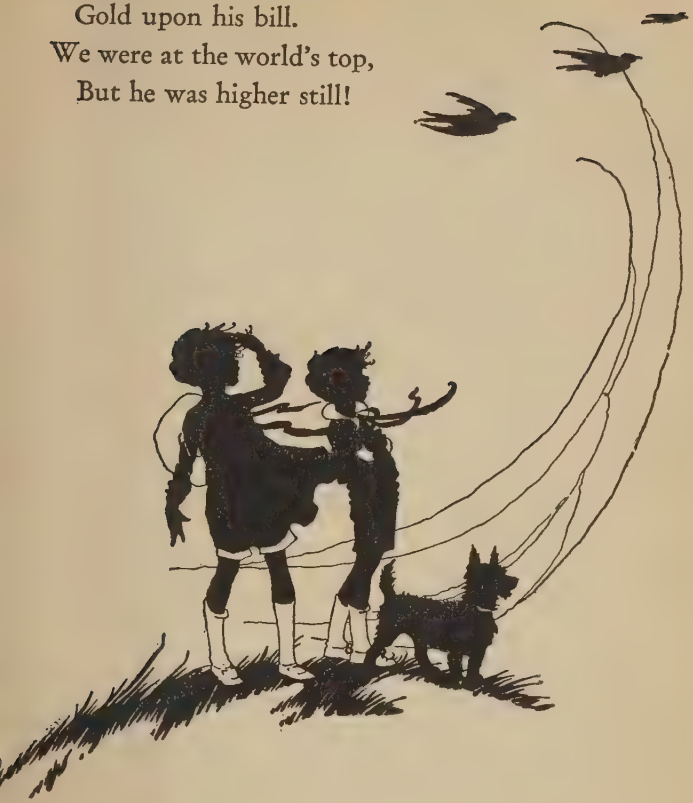
High upon a Hilltop

HIGH upon a hilltop,
Green and spangled fair,
Warm the wind was blowing
Out of Everywhere.

Gay the flowers flickered,
Soft the grasses swirled.
"Ah," said we, "we've traveled
To the top of the world!"

High upon a hilltop,
Fleet we saw a swallow;
Flying, skimming, floating
Up from field and hollow,

Sunlight on his wing tips,
Gold upon his bill.
We were at the world's top,
But he was higher still!



Posing

Now I have him ready,
Much against his will,
His upper paws are steady,
His lower stiff and still.

His tail is nicely crumpled,
His ears are straight and keen,
His coat is hardly rumpled,
His eyes are shining green.

I don't hear any mewings,
But his stomach's stopped its purr.
He doesn't like these doings—
I feel it in his fur.

He seems so large and tickly,
  He seems so queer and sleek.
His claws are getting prickly—
  Do snap the camera, quick!

The Bagpipe Man

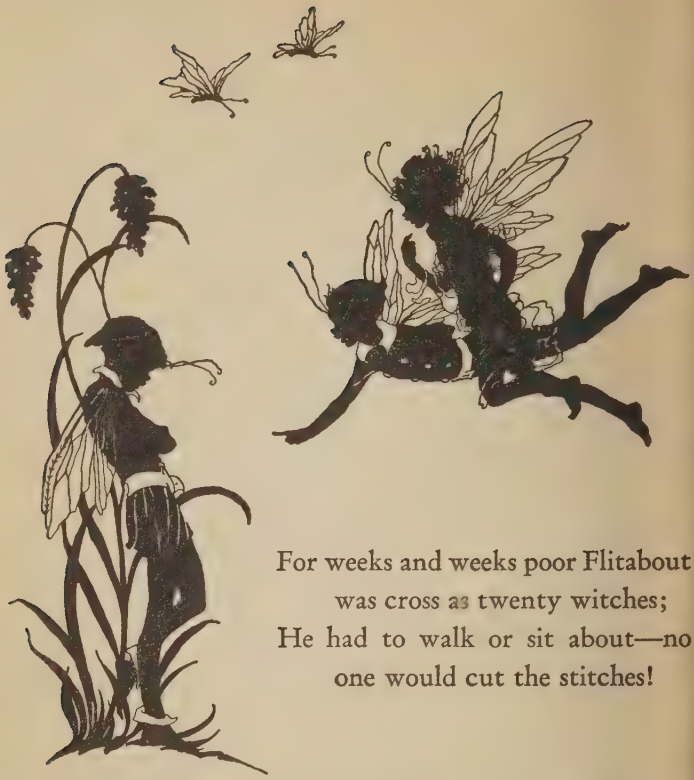
THE bagpipe man came over our hill
When no one knew he was anywhere round,
With a whirl and a skirl, a toot and a trill;
And we all went scampering after the sound.
We cried, "Oh, tell us, what do you play?
What do you play so queer, so queer?"
And he skipped a couple of notes to say,
"But tell me, what do ye hear?"

Then one of us heard a trumpet sweet,
And the tramp, tramp, tramp of marching men;
And one of us heard the dancing feet
Of fairies down in a dusky glen;
And one of us called it a bird in June,
And one, a river that ran and ran.
But he never would tell us the name of his tune,
The funny old bagpipe man!

The Careless Fairy

LITTLE FAIRY FLITABOUT had such a craze for fleetness
He didn't care a bit about a prosy thing like neatness.
He'd rush around and brush around through briers, brambles, hedges,
And snip his hems and rip his tucks and frazzle out his edges.
He'd tear his tunic top to toe, then with a joyous whistle
Fly straight into a thorny bush or perch upon a thistle.
He really did not care a rap
About the way he looked, that chap.

The fairy tailors lost much time in smoothing out his scratches
And sewing up his seams again and putting on his patches.
So when he tore a jagged hole right through his gauzy wing
One tailor said, "Upon my soul, I'll cure him of this thing.
I'll take him down a peg or two, and teach him that it matters
To dash about and crash about in rags and tags and tatters!"
Gay Flitabout sat airily and ordered, "Mend me, please.
I bumped my wing against a bee. Such nuisances, the bees!"
He told a tale of how he'd flown that very summer day
Against a mortal's latticework and barely got away.
He hummed a tune, he smiled a smile, he cut a joke or two.
"Now!" said the tailor in a while, "Get down, young man; you'll do."
"Of course I'll do," laughed Flitabout and tried to spread his wings.
Alas, alack, they would not move! Whatever ailed the things?
Then round he wheeled and round he whirled, but all to no avail,
As helpless as a little dog that tries to catch his tail.
With skillful stitches, firm and strong, but light as any feather,
The solemn little tailor man had sewed his wings together!



For weeks and weeks poor Flitabout
was cross as twenty witches;
He had to walk or sit about—no
one would cut the stitches!

And when the tailor set him free he fled, so swift and whizzy
That even homing honeybees at sight of him grew dizzy.

But all the same, from that time on, in fairyland or out,
You couldn't find a sprucer chap than that young Flitabout.

Old Man Long Ago

YESTERDAY, at dip of dusk,
While the light was still
Gold across the treetops
And amber over the hill,
While the moon was swinging low,
I saw, as plain as plain,
Old man Long Ago
Coming down our lane,
Leaning on his cane.

His shabby shoes were dusty brown,
And briers were in his coat,
But quick he hummed a little tune
Down in his throat;
The rusty buckles at his knees
Would hardly hold together,
But in his hat he wore aslant
A bright, brave feather.
He leaned upon his knobby stick,
He curtsied to the moon,
A far-off look upon his face
And a quaver in his tune,
A wrinkled look about his eyes
Of time and wind and weather.
Then with a chuckle on he went
Beneath his bobbing feather.

Some see this and some see that,
As soon as shadows fall;
Some see little, and some see much,
And some see nothing at all.
But I saw at dip of dusk,
Just as plain as plain
(A jolly feather in his hat
Tipped with red—as plain as that),
Old man Long Ago
Coming down our lane,
Leaning on his cane.

The Sampler

WHEN great-grandmother was ten years old,
They gave her a needle and colored thread—
Blue and crimson and white and gold—
And "Start on your sampler now," they said.
And day by day as her elders planned,
Letter by letter in red and gold,
She set her stitches with careful hand,—
When great-grandmother was ten years old.

Maybe 'twas different in her day,
For never a leaf is on a tree,
While the birds sit up in the queerest way,
Straight in the air, quite easily.
I've thought and thought, but I'm sure I never
Ate any such fruit as her baskets hold.
My, little girls were surely clever
When great-grandmother was ten years old!

Chairoplane Chant

If every one had a flying machine
The size of a small armchair,
Then day after day, in the promptest way
I'd go out to take the air.
I'd shift a lever and press a brake,
And buzz into the blue.
Oho, the bushels of air I'd take,
Flying to call on you!

As I skirted a steeple and skimmed a roof,
With engine whirring loud,
I'd meet you coming for dear life, humming
Around the rim of a cloud.
We'd dodge a swallow and duck a crow,
And you would cry, "Whoopee,
I was going to call on you, you know—
Were you coming to call on me?"

It's rather awkward to chat, of course,
From a high-geared chairoplane,
So we'd buzz away. But the very next day
We'd meet in a sky-blue lane,

With wind in our wings,
and the way all clear,
And I'd sing, "Ho, hal-
loo,
Were you coming to call
on me? O *dear,*
I was going to call on
you!"

Balloons

THE wind is whistling lively tunes
And tugging at the gay balloons;
Sooner or later, big and bright,
They'll all be journeying out of sight.

Where will Lavender go?
It will waft and waft by field and meadow,
Soft as thistledown, slow as a shadow,
However the wind may blow.

What will become of Blue?
Blue'll go fluttering down the air
Into a quiet wood, and there
Alight as little birds do.

Will Rose-Pink find a home?
Into a garden it will sink,
And shine, and make the gardener think
His rose bush is in bloom.

What will become of Green?
Green will float to a faraway town,
And the castle servants will haul it down
And take it in to the Queen.

How about Red at last?
Red will float till it comes to the sea,
And follow a fair ship sailing free,
And tie itself to the mast.

But Yellow-As-Gold—for days
Yellow will float till the wind is still,
Then tumble over my window sill
And be my own always.

The wind is whistling crazy tunes
And snatching at the light balloons;
He'll toss them high and far. But one
Is coming back to be my own!

Ships

Go out, good ships, across the tide,
Be brave to meet all weathers;
Make many a port, and fill each hold
With sky-blue silk and yellow gold
And pearls and peacock feathers.

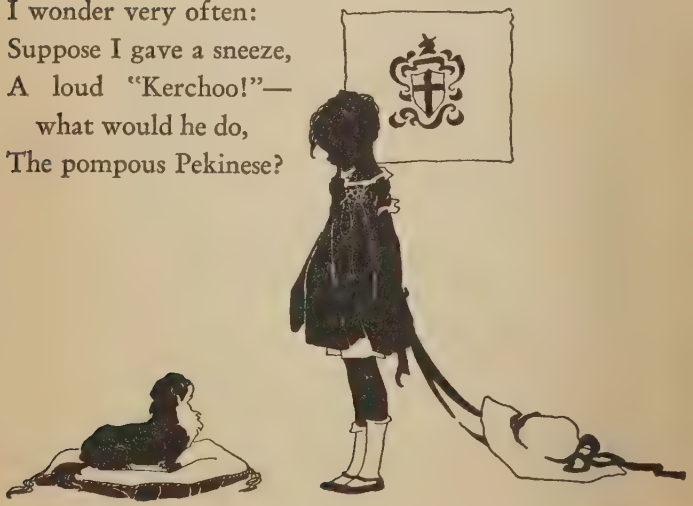
The wind is in your shining sails,
Your keen prows cut the foam;
Sail very fast and very far,
Then turn, and by the Northern Star
Come steering safely home.

The Extraordinary Dog

WHEN Mother takes me calling
I say, "Oh, please and please
Let's visit with the folks who own
The funny Pekinese!"

I walk around him softly
Upon my tipsy-toes;
He sits so queer and solemn there,
So scornful in the nose.

I wonder very often:
Suppose I gave a sneeze,
A loud "Kerchoo!"—
what would he do,
The pompous Pekinese?

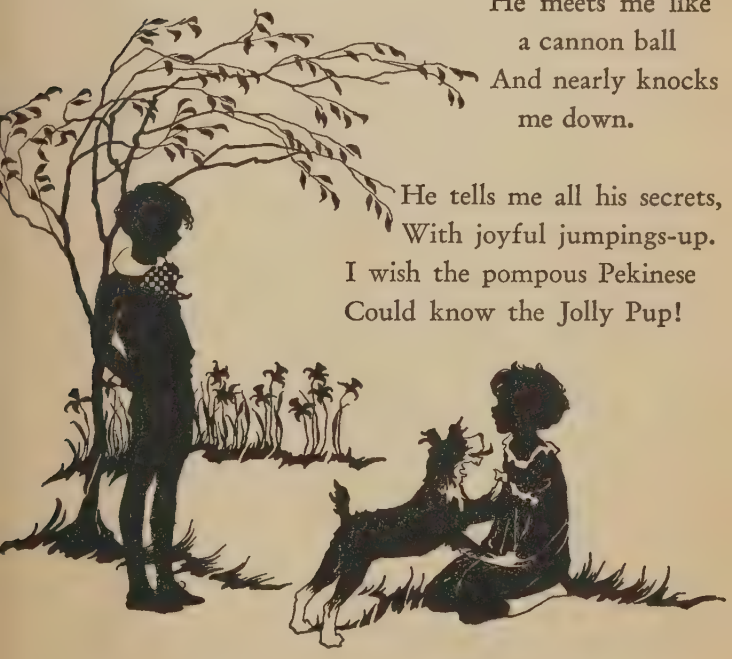


The Ordinary Dog

WHEN Brother takes me walking
I cry, "Oh, hip, hooray!
We're sure to see the jolly pup
That joins us every day!"

His ears are raggy-shaggy;
His coat's a dusty brown;
He meets me like
a cannon ball
And nearly knocks
me down.

He tells me all his secrets,
With joyful jumpings-up.
I wish the pompous Pekinese
Could know the Jolly Pup!



Porlock

As we went down to Porlock
All in the autumn weather,
Beads were on the brier bush,
Pearls were on the heather.

How the hill was tilted!
How the rain was rife!
We met a misty donkey
Twice as large as life;

We passed a giant greybeard
With fog upon his face.
How far, how far to Porlock?
"Oh, aye, there's such a place."

The mist was on our lashes,
The chill was in our breath;
We seemed to trudge forever
With nothing underneath.

So far, so far to Porlock,
There's never such a town!
Still fretting in the grayness
We stumbled down and down.

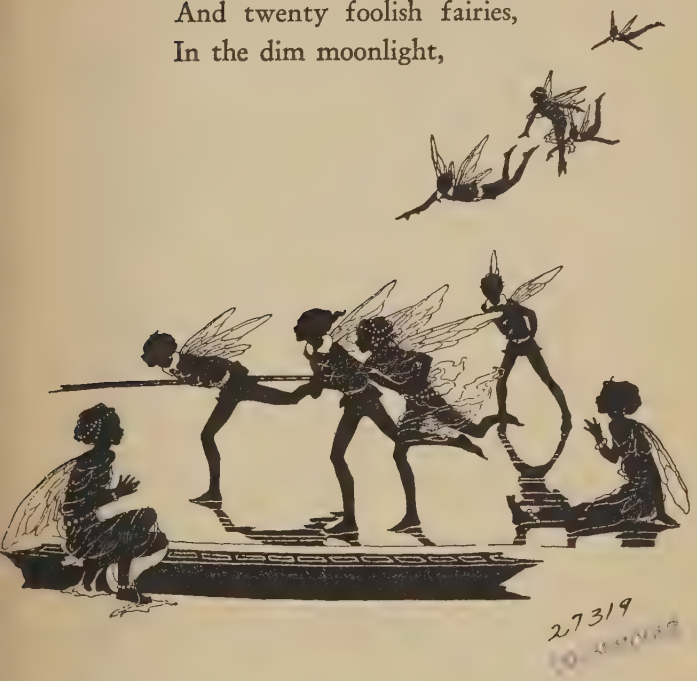
Then—sharp the shadow lifted,
The gloom went breaking by,
And there lay little Porlock
With every doorstep dry,

With posies in the gardens,
And roses on the walls,
And pleasant people nodding
In pinafores and shawls.

Oh, I would climb to world's top,
And trudge the whole way down,
For sake of coming sudden again
On little Porlock town!

Twenty Foolish Fairies

SOMEBODY left a mirror
Out on the lawn last night,
And twenty foolish fairies,
In the dim moonlight,



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Mistook it for an ice-pond.
When the morning broke
Twenty early robins
Chuckled at the joke.

Spring Wind

THE west wind dances down the lane and sets the robins winging;
It has a message sweet and plain, for some folks hear it singing:
O *hurry, gather daffodils! They're scattered over all the hills*
As thick as anything!
The little buds unfold again, in buff and white and gold again—
It's Spring, Spring, Spring!

The west wind races up the road and sets the green grass sprouting;
It wakes the turtle and the toad, and some folks hear it shouting:

O hurry, fetch your bat and ball, put on your oldest shoes of all,
And cap and everything.
It's turning fine and hot again, the boys are in the lot again—
It's Spring, Spring, Spring!

The Resolute Cat

A GRAY cat, very willful
took a notion once t
wander
And clawing (and paw
ing), climbed up int
a tree.
"I'll hide here and bide her
and have a nap besid
here,
And I won't come down for a kingdom, indeed I won't," said he.

But a small girl, very lonely, kept calling, "Kitty! Kitty!"
And fearing (and peering), climbed slowly up the tree.
"Oho, sir, I know, sir, you want to stay and doze, sir,
But won't you change your mind, please, and come on down?" said she.

The gray cat, very scornful, pretended he was snoring.
"I wouldn't come down for a kingdom, I wouldn't indeed," snored he.
"Oh, gray cat, come away, cat; there's cream and curds and whey, cat,
In a blue bowl in the kitchen. And the dog has seen it," said she.

The gray cat, very drowsy, twitched his whiskers, twitched them quickly;
His big eyes opened, opened, as green as green could be.
"I seem, girl, in a dream, girl, to catch the scent of cream, girl;
I've napped enough for one day, perhaps I have," said he.

And, zip! he was out of the tree.
"Oho, oho!" said she.

Magpie Lane

MAGPIE LANE in Oxford Town is a little crooked street.
Wonder if a magpie once on light and thievish feet,
Running in a zigzag way, mighty sly and nimble,
Hid a chain, a lump of wax, a penny and a thimble.

Then, they laid the city out, and found the zigzag line,
Traced it to a shabby hole full of treasure fine
(A lump of wax, a penny old, a thimble and a chain),
And built a little crooked street and called it Magpie Lane.

Magic

BETTY had opened an old green door
Set in an old red wall.
Vines had hidden it well before;
It hadn't seemed there at all.
Then workmen pulled the ivy away,
And when she came again to play
There was the funny old faded door
Right in the old red wall.

Slow she opened the door and found
A dear old garden square.
Flowers were shining all around,
Flowers were thronging fair:
A starry group by an old gray stone,
A little bell shape swinging alone,
And dozens of others, white and gold,
Crimson and blue, were there.

Can you think of anything much more sweet
Than a secret door in a wall
And blossoms crowding about your feet,
Lovely and bright and small?
"Flowers!" cried Betty, "O flowers dear,
How could I dream you were so near?
But I never will shut the old green door—
Too well I love you all!"

An Oversight

JACK FROST came over the hill one day,
Tickety-tickety-tick,
And summoned the little elves from their play,
Clickety-clickety-click.

He said, "You scalawags, listen to me—
I thought you had painted the very last tree,
But a maple I've seen that you left stark green.
Now get out your paints right quick!"

Each elf boy scampered for pail and brush,
Flippity-flippity-flap;
They worked with a will and they worked with a rush,
Clippity-clippity-clap.

Crimson and yellow and brown they spattered,
Gold and scarlet and bronze they scattered,
Till that gay tree (so a bird told me)
Was the
finest tree
on
the
map!

Flame Song

BURN, wood, burn—
Wood that was once a tree, and knew
Blossom and sheaf and the Spring's return,
Nest and singing, and rain and dew—
Burn, wood, burn!

Shine, flame, shine—
  Woven of sunlight through and through,
Light of the centuries, golden, fine,
  Clear and exquisite, warm and true—
Shine, flame, shine!

Bless, fire, bless—
  Play on lintel and wall and beam,
Touch our lives with your loveliness,
  Fill our hearts with your singing dream—
Bless, fire, bless!

Kittens' Questionnaire

I MET four young and handsome kits,
In black fur coats and velvet mitts.

They asked me many questions: "Why
Do mice run fast and robins fly?

"Where do balls roll? Why should a feather
Do such strange tricks in windy weather?

"What makes a big dog rush about?
What makes a bowl of cream give out?

"Why does our mother never fail
To box us when we pat her tail?

"Oh, tell us, tell us, if you can, sir!"
I didn't know a single answer.

Going up to London

"As I went up to London,"
I heard a stranger say—
Going up to London
In such a casual way!
He turned the magic phrase
That has haunted all my days
As though it were a common thing
For careless lips to say.
As he went up to London—
I'll wager many a crown
He never saw the road that I
Shall take to London town!

When I go up to London
'Twill be in April weather.
I'll have a riband on my rein
And flaunt a scarlet feather;

The broom will toss its brush for me;
Two blackbirds and a thrush will be
Assembled in a bush for me
And sing a song together.
And all the blossomy hedgerows
Will shake their hawthorn down
As I go riding, riding
Up to London town.

Halting on a tall hill
Pied with purple flowers,
Twenty turrets I shall count,
And twice as many towers;
Count them on my finger-tips
As I used to do,
And half a hundred spires
Pricking toward the blue.

There will be a glass dome
And a roof of gold,
And a latticed window high
Tilting toward the western sky,
As I knew of old.
London, London,
They counted me a fool—
I could draw your skyline plain
Before I went to school!

Riding, riding downward
By many a silver ridge
And many a slope of amethyst,
I'll come to London Bridge—
London Bridge flung wide for me,
Horses drawn aside for me,
Thames my amber looking-glass
As I proudly pass;
Lords and flunkies, dukes and dames,
Country folk with comely names
Wondering at my steadfast face,
Beggars curtsying,
Footmen falling back a space—
I would scarcely stay my pace
If I met the King!
If I met the King himself
He'd smile beneath his frown:
"Who is this comes traveling up
So light to London town?"

Riding, riding eagerly,
Thrusting through the throng
(Traveling light, Your Majesty,
Because the way was long),
I'll hurry fast to London gate
(The way was long, and I am late),
I'll come at last to London gate,
Singing me a song—
Some old rime of ancient time
When wondrous things befell.
And there the boys and girls at play,
Understanding well,
Quick will hail me, clear and sweet,
Crowding, crowding after;
Every little crooked street
Will echo to their laughter;
Lilting, as they mark my look,
Chanting, two and two,
Dreamed it, dreamed it in a dream
And waked and found it true!

Sing, you rimes, and ring, you chimes,
And swing, you bells of Bow!
When I go up to London
All the world shall know!

Goose Girl

FANNY from the city had never seen a fowl;
She didn't know a guinea from a gander or an owl;
And when the farmer's wife said, "Go drive the geese up, dear,"
That foolish Fanny did the thing you see her doing here.

The geese were tame and trustful, and pleased to see her come;
She rigged them up with strings and things and drove the trio home.
She said, "I'll teach these creatures before the summer's gone
To come up in the evening without their harness on!"

Wings and Wheels

Ahoy and ahoy, birds!
We cannot have wings
And feathers and things,
But dashing on wheels
With the wind at our heels
Is almost like flying—
Such joy, birds!

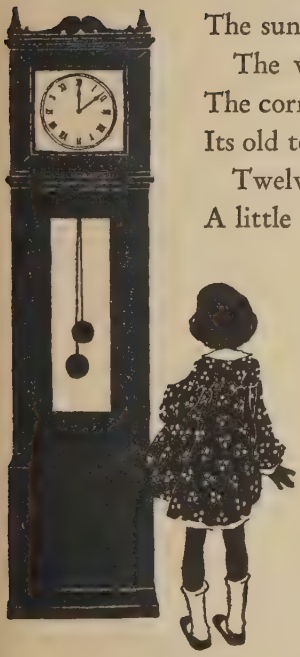
Oho and oho, birds!
Of course we can't rise
Up and up to the skies;

But skimming and sliding
On rollers, and gliding,
Is almost as jolly,
You know, birds!

Whist!

Oh, hist!
Look—whist!
There are three fat rabbits beside a bush,
Three frolicking, rollicking, rompy rabbits
With beautiful habits—
Oh, sh-h-h!
Such hoppity, floppity, happy friskers!
The wind in their whiskers
Has tickled their ears and flipped their fur
Until each one
Is foolish with fun.
Don't breathe! Don't stir!
Three of them, wild by the windy bush!
Oh, hush!

Maybe!



It's quiet in the sweet old hall,
The stairs are like a ladder white,
The sunshine's yellow on the wall,
The window-panes are crystal-bright.
The corner clock talks clear and slow,
Its old tongue wagging to and fro.
Twelve mellow words it chuckled out
A little while ago.

A curious fancy comes to me.
Suppose the clock had told instead
"Twelve o' the night," quite solemnly,
With everybody else in bed.
I wonder would I sit quite still
With moonlight falling silver-chill?
Maybe I'll try, some night, and see—
Maybe I will!

Look!

WHEN Polly went up to the attic
She had on her everyday things:
A pair of stout shoes
Such as other girls use,
A gingham, an apron with strings.

But she found an old box
That was weak in the locks
Pushed back in a dusty old nook;
She lifted the lid to see what it hid
And when she came down—well, just look!

The Visitor

He came to my little house in the wood,
Sudden a shadow was on the floor,
A stir in the flowers—and there he stood,
Looking in at the door.

He shared for an hour my small hearth's cheer,
Tall and dusty and shabbily clad,
Chin of a soldier, eyes of a seer,
Mouth of a little lad.

I made some toast and I brewed some tea;
We sat and talked by the last red ember.
What I said to him, what he said to me,
I never could remember.

But sudden into his eyes there came
A look of listening, as though he heard
Something afar off naming a name,
Something calling a word.

And whether he caught a hilltop hail,
  Or the silver sound of a bugle blowing,
Or a bell note over a misty vale,
  Is ever past my knowing.

He snatched an apple, he threw me a kiss,
  He blessed my roof with a sign, and then
He was off and away. And from that to this
  I have never seen him again.

And now—and now—when the flowers sigh
  And a sudden shadow is on the floor . . .
It is only a bird wing slanting by,
  Or a little wind at the door.

Prince Peter

YOUNG PRINCE PETER suddenly, once,
For no real reason behaved like a dunce.

His bath was ready that summer morning,
But he said very loud (without any warning):

"Who wants to scrub—oh, pish, oh, stuff!—
In a silly old tub? I am clean enough!"

He threw out the towels and soap, and then—
"I never," he cried, "will bathe again!"

And rushed to the garden, wild and foolish,
Kicking his heels and being mulish.

All of the pansies were in their places,
The sun just drying their new-washed faces.

A toad went skittering down the path,
Bound for a puddle, to take a bath.

A robin dipped in a clear, brown pool;
He thought Prince Peter was rather a fool.

"Hist!" he said to a startled wren,
"The prince is never to bathe again."

Down by the duck pond Diddles and Daddles
Pushed through the water with legs like paddles.

They dived and chuckled, "He'll bathe no more."
Puss sat stiff by the kitchen door,

Washing her children, five fat kittens,
With pearl-white collars and pearl-gray mittens.

She washed each kitten from toe to crown,
And cuffed it lightly to polish it down.

They sang with happiness in their throats—
Stiff-starched whiskers and shiny coats.

They gazed at Peter, who stood abashed,
They mourned, "He'll never again be washed."

All at once, with a drooping head,
Into the palace Peter fled.

His buttons were popping as he flew;
He flung off his collar and kicked off his shoe;

Into the bathroom wildly burst,
Into the bathtub hopped head first.

"Hurrp and humph!" he said, with a splash,
" 'Twould be so lonesome never to wash!"

And from that time on there was never a neater Boy in the kingdom than young Prince Peter.

The Weather Factory

JUST as soon as summer's done,
Such a flit and flutter!
In the weather factory
Such a clip-and-clutter!

Nuts are begging, "Send us frost!"
In a month or so
Children will be saying, "Ah,
If 'twould only snow!"

So the little weather folk
Dash around and scurry;
Everybody with a job,
Working in a flurry.

"Winkle, Twinkle, mix the frost.
Hoppy, grind the hail.
Make icicles, Nip and Tuck—
Thousands, without fail!

Tippy, start the flake machine
Quickly, and remember—
Twenty million tons of snow
Needed by November.

Whipper, Snapper, hurry up!"
Soon as autumn's come,

In the weather factory
Things begin to hum.

The Little Road

A LITTLE road was straying
Across a little hill.
I asked, "May I go with you, Road?"
It answered, "If you will."

'Twas travel-stained and shabby,
And dust was on its face.
Said I: "How fine to wander free
To every lovely place!

"Or if you're off to mountains
Or if you're off to sea,
Or if you're bound across the world,
It's all the same to me."

We loitered in the sunlight,
We journeyed on together;
The sky was like a bluebird's wing,
The wind was like a feather.

We passed a ruddy robin
Who called, "How do you do?"
Some daisies shook their bonnets back
And begged, "Ah, take us too!"

A squirrel briefly joined us,
A brook came hurrying down;
We wandered through a meadow green
And by a busy town.

. . . . . .

When dusky twilight met us,
No feet so slow as mine.
"Why, there's a little house," I said,
"With windows all ashine.

"Perhaps, since night is nearing,
I'd rather rest than roam."
"I knew you would," said Little Road;
"That's why I brought you home."

Lost Things

SUPPOSE that all the lost things,
So strangely hid from sight,
The seldom-thought-upon things,
The given-up-for-gone things,
Should all at once, together,
Come suddenly to light!

There'd be immense confusion
That's safe to say, you know:
Much rushing round and nabbing,
Much snatching, catching, grabbing,
Much skipping hither and thither
And running to and fro,

With, "Here's my collar button!"
And, "Here's my baseball bat!"
And, "There's the pen I peered for,"
And, "There's the pin I feared for,"
And, "There's my long-lost locket,"
And, "There's my this or that."

'T'would be a very awkward
Condition of affairs;
So many folks would claim things,
Would want the very same things,
With countless "that's" and "this's"
And endless "here's" and "there's";

With, "Pardon me, but really
That object's mine, you see";
And, "Oh, I must explain, ma'am,
You have my watch and chain, ma'am";
And, "Sorry, sir, but truly
That knife belongs to me."

Oh, such a helter-skelter
And dashing near and far!
Such fumings and such frettings
And impolite upsettings!
I rather hope the lost things
Will stay just where they are!

When Young Melissa Sweeps

WHEN young Melissa sweeps a room
I vow she dances with the broom!

She curtsies in a corner brightly
And leads her partner forth politely.

Then up and down in jigs and reels,
With gold dust flying at their heels,

They caper. With a whirl or two
They make the wainscot shine like new;

They waltz beside the hearth, and quick
It brightens, shabby brick by brick.

A gay gavotte across the floor,
A Highland fling from door to door,

And every crack and corner's clean
Enough to suit a dainty queen.

If ever you are full of gloom,
Just watch Melissa sweep a room!

Snowlight

THERE's something very lovely
In snowlight, in snowlight,
When day has gone and dusk is done,
And all the world is still;

When night comes down the meadow,
And low light, then no light
Except the soft, clear shine of snow
Is over wood and hill.

The little firs stand windless,
All darkly, all starkly;
The cedars and the sentry pines
Keep watch across the lawn;
And a rabbit carved in onyx
Sits peering, half fearing. . . .
There's magic in the snowlight
Between the dusk and dawn!

Multiplication

A FAIRY lost her dimple
While wading in a brook.
She said, "I must be simple
To go and lose a dimple.
I'll have to stop and look."
She searched each shining nook,
And couldn't find it anywhere,
But, since she had so many,
She didn't really truly care
A penny.
One dimple she could hardly miss.
The point is this:

That dimple broke into a million
More dimples—some have said a billion—

(And even a trillion). Anyway,
Whenever by a stream you stray,
Shoals of dimples you will see,
Twinkling bright and twinkling free.
Stop and look,
Remembering how a fairy girl
Dropped one dimple in a brook.

Candle Song

BEND, little flame!
Bend like a flower as I blow,
Tulip-colored and all aglow.
Nobody guesses the way you go,
Nor the way you came.

Shine on the night.
Fair as a star your beauty gleams,
Clear and golden and dear and bright.
Lead me to bed, it is time for dreams—
Shine, little light!